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FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8134
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 1781
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 PRAGUE 001331

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EUR/NCE FOR FICHTE, PM FOR DOWLEY, OSD FOR SADOWSKA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/23/2016
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [EZ](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#)
SUBJECT: MISSILE DEFENSE: VISIT OF DASD BRIAN GREEN TO
PRAGUE

Classified By: DCM Cameron Munter for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary and comment: DASD Brian Green made a well received presentation on 19 October to a Czech Foreign Ministry co-sponsored conference on missile defense. Both supporters and opponents of possible Czech participation in a U.S. missile defense system attended the event. Following the conference DASD Green had positive meetings with the First Deputy Foreign Minister and with policy staff at the Ministry of Defense. The governing right-of-center Civic Democrats (ODS) continue to support missile defense. The left-of-center Social Democrats (CSSD) have been careful to leave the door mostly open to a radar facility only. Key factors in domestic debate on missile defense in the coming weeks will be the use of polling data to influence public opinion, and the success or failure of government formation negotiations. Overall this is an essentially domestic debate that often has little to do with the issue of missile defense itself. End summary and comment.

¶2. (U) Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Forces Policy Brian Green visited Prague on October 19 to participate in a Czech Foreign Ministry co-sponsored conference on missile defense. DASD Green gave a 30-minute presentation focused primarily on the technical aspects of missile defense. Green's presentation followed introductory remarks by Ambassador Graber and a 30-minute presentation by Czech Defense Minister Sedivy. Both supporters and opponents of possible Czech participation in a U.S. missile defense system attended the event.

¶3. (U) Minister Sedivy argued strongly that given indisputable evidence of the steps being taken by certain irresponsible states to acquire both nuclear weapons and advanced long-range missile technology, it would be illogical for Europe not to take measures to protect itself. Sedivy stated that with no defensive capability, Europe and NATO would be vulnerable to missile attack and thus be limited in its ability to influence events in the Middle East. Sedivy articulately countered several of the most frequently heard arguments made by opponents of missile defense in the Czech Republic, emphasizing that the opposition to any Czech participation to missile was being led by the Czech communist party.

¶4. (U) DASD Green provided information on the future of ballistic missile threats and U.S./allied plans to deal with the challenge. Green's presentation was well received and was followed by a brief question and answer period that allowed Green to reinforce the points made during his presentations. Even questions raised by the communist party representative did not fundamentally challenge the underlying necessity of developing missile defense, but focused on

secondary issues such as why the U.S. would not use bases already in Germany to station the system.

MINISTRY OF DEFENSE ON MISSILE DEFENSE AND NATO

15. (C) At the Ministry of Defense DASD Green met with Deputy Director for Defense and Security Policy Radomir Jahoda. Jahoda briefed that ongoing negotiations on the future government of the Czech Republic continued to make it difficult to predict when the Czech Republic would be operating normally. New elections in the spring were a possibility. Jahoda commented that the leaderships of the two main parties (ODS and CSSD) were both in favor of hosting a radar site. Former PM Jiri Paroubek, the CSSD leader, had publicly declared that, while he would support a referendum on the issue of hosting interceptors, a referendum would not be necessary for the Czech Republic to host a radar (Note: Paroubek had been playing to commonly held Czech public misperceptions that an interceptor site would be extremely large and involve many troops, while a radar site would be comparatively insignificant. End note). Jahoda indicated that the Ministry of Defense was working with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to prepare additional briefing information for the members of Parliament, in an effort to educate the decision-makers.

16. (C) Jahoda shared the results of recent bilateral discussions with Poland, which had included the issue of missile defense. There is "agreement" on the necessity of missile defense in Central Europe and "not disagreement" (sic) on the possibility of a split of the interceptor site and the radar between the Poland and the Czech Republic.

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17. (C) Jahoda thanked the United States for arranging Expanded Working Group-Reinforced (EWGR) meetings on missile defense at NATO. The U.S. side noted the Czech Republic was strong in its support for the U.S. in the EWGR and looked forward to consultations with the Czechs in advance of the November EWGR meeting. Jahoda said it was unfortunate that the French had broken silence on a Czech proposal to declassify part of the NATO missile defense feasibility study for use in the public debate on missile defense in Central Europe. He remained optimistic that something could be done in this regard.

18. (C) Turning to Riga, Jahoda said the goal of the Czech Republic is to ensure that the final communique included a "simple and positive" statement about missile defense. The Czechs seek wording that noted a) the completion of the NATO study as well as b) a statement that missile defense is feasible would meet this threshold. While the Czech Republic would welcome wording in the communique that said missile defense would be "desirable," the Czechs agreed that obtaining such language could be difficult.

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ON NATO,
POLAND, AND CZECH POLITICS

19. (C) First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Thomas Pojar told DASD Green that NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer would visit Prague on October 30th and the Czechs were working to ensure that he did not make negative comments about missile defense. Pojar said that it would have been helpful if the Secretary General were inclined to make positive comments on missile defense, but it appeared the mere avoidance of any negative pronouncements would be a success in itself.

110. (C) Pojar gave his personal impressions from his discussions on missile defense with Polish leaders,

commenting that the Poles had expressed disappointment at the level of information sharing from the U.S. Pojar's Polish interlocutors had been divided on whether Russia was pressuring Poland over missile defense. Half had said Russia was pressuring Poland, half had said there was no pressure at all from Moscow. Pojar also commented that pressure from Russia on the Czech Republic had so far been negligible.

¶11. (C) Pojar agreed that the political outlook on the formation of a stable Czech Government was unclear. However, he felt that pursuit of a radar was feasible, citing the example of Parliamentary Speaker Lubomir Zaoralek (CSSD), who was personally opposed to an interceptor site, but had attempted to prevent the Communists from introducing legislation that would require a referendum on any U.S. facility in the Czech Republic.

¶12. (C) Pojar said that, during the current political phase, he would continue to represent the Czech Republic on the issue. He made a plea for the U.S. to provide him with its decision on the location of missile defense facilities as soon as the decision is made, and before it becomes public. Pojar believed strongly that it would be counterproductive for opponents of missile defense to hear the news first through the press, a situation that would weaken supporters of missile defense at a time when they were trying to form a government.

¶13. (C) Comment: As the Czech Republic wanders towards the formation of a stable government, missile defense continues to be a target for political opportunists on the left seeking votes through populist misrepresentations of the issue. On a positive note, the election-winning ODS has stuck to its pro-MD stance. Many in the CSSD have split the difference, playing to the crowd by leaning against an interceptor base, while playing to the U.S. by leaving open the door to hosting a radar site. The key is to ensure that door remains open.

¶14. (C) Comment continued: Overall, the largest Czech political party remains strongly pro-missile defense and it appears that a majority of the Czech Republic's political leadership could decide to support the building of a radar site on Czech territory. While the war of the polls and the public debate on missile defense continue, the real outcome will emerge from political sniping that is exclusively domestic. If an MD facility is offered to the Czech Republic, the way in which it is done could significantly influence

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this domestic debate. Above all, we will publicly stress the point that the U.S. is responding to a Czech offer, and that discussions are between allies, not a master-servant type relationship reminiscent of the Russian bases in Czech history.

¶15. (C) Comment continued: Most important, any American announcements on Missile Defense must be coordinated closely in advance with the Czechs and Poles to ensure public support. End comment.

¶16. (U) DASD Green has cleared this cable.
GRABER